



This fact sheet was written by the **Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)**, a federal public health agency. ATSDR's mission is to serve the public by using the best science, taking responsive public health actions, and providing trusted health information to prevent harmful exposure and disease related to toxic substances.

Asbestos

Summary of ATSDR's Public Health Consultation: *Asbestos Exposures at Oak Ridge High School*

What is the purpose of this fact sheet?

Purpose

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide you with information about a public health consultation ATSDR completed regarding asbestos exposures at Oak Ridge High School. This fact sheet contains a summary of ATSDR's findings and gives you instructions for submitting comments during the public comment period, which is open until June 20, 2005.

Peer review

Many issues in asbestos science are currently debated among scientists. ATSDR asked three asbestos science experts to "peer review" a draft of the public health consultation. The purpose of the peer review was to ensure that the evaluation performed in the document was done using the best science given the nature of the available information. The public health consultation was reviewed by three asbestos science experts who have no affiliation with ATSDR. ATSDR is now releasing the report (including peer review comments and our responses) to the public for comment.

Why did ATSDR perform a public health consultation at Oak Ridge High School?

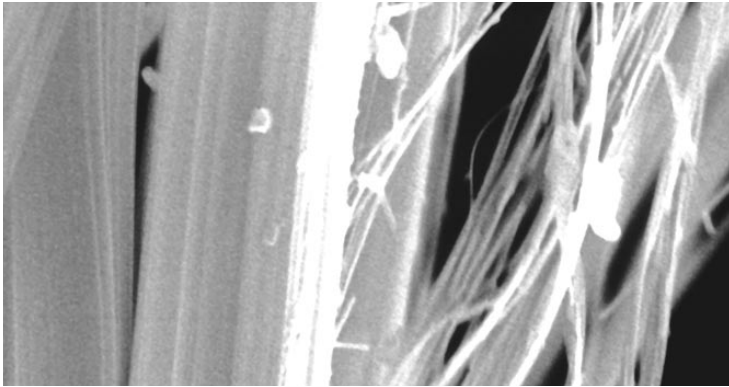
How ATSDR got involved

A community member requested that ATSDR evaluate the potential health risk associated with current and past asbestos exposures of students and staff at the high school.

Why asbestos is an issue at Oak Ridge High School

Amphibole asbestos has been identified in rocks and soils on and around Oak Ridge High School property. A vein of amphibole asbestos was disturbed during construction of a soccer field on the Oak Ridge High School property in 2002. In the fall of 2004, the school district and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) completed activities to mitigate potential asbestos exposures at the high school. Mitigation activities are designed to make something less harmful or severe.

Breathing in asbestos—especially the amphibole type found around Oak Ridge High School—can increase the risk of developing various types of lung disease. In the public health consultation, ATSDR evaluated whether current or past exposures to asbestos at the school were high enough to increase the risk of disease.



Magnification of Asbestos Fibers

What are the findings of the health consultation?

Current exposure

USEPA and the school district personnel have removed the potential for exposure to asbestos on the school campus. Specifically, the following actions have been taken:

- Classrooms have been cleaned and tested for asbestos.
- All bare areas and soils containing asbestos have been either covered with clean fill or landscaped to prevent the release of asbestos fibers.

ATSDR determined that asbestos exposures at the school have been minimized and are not likely to increase the risk of disease.

Past exposure

The available data about past exposures are not sufficient to make numerical estimates of risk. However, a general evaluation of the data indicates that potential exposures to amphibole asbestos in the past were high enough to increase the risk of adverse health effects for highly exposed groups. These potentially highly exposed groups include the following people:

- coaches
- outdoor maintenance workers
- student athletes

This does not mean that people in these groups who were exposed in the past will develop asbestos-related disease. It means that potential exposures were high

enough to increase risk and that it was necessary to take action to prevent further exposure by cleaning classrooms and covering soils or landscaping.

What are the specific conclusions and recommendations of the public health consultation?

Conclusions

The conclusions of the health consultation are as follows:

1. Current exposures to asbestos at Oak Ridge High School have been minimized by cleaning classrooms and covering or landscaping bare areas of soil throughout the campus.
2. Exposures to amphibole asbestos probably occurred in the past. The greatest exposures were likely experienced by coaches who spent lots of time on athletic fields and tracks, outdoor maintenance staff, and student athletes.
3. Past exposure to amphibole asbestos increases the risk of developing mesothelioma and other lung diseases. Not enough information exists to accurately calculate this risk. Groups who had the highest exposures would have more risk of developing asbestos-related disease. The increased level of risk does not necessarily mean that disease will result.
4. Studies on the prevalence and magnitude of amphibole asbestos exposures outside of Oak Ridge High School will provide information essential for determining the risk of developing asbestos-related disease in community members as a whole.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the health consultation are:

1. The school district should carry out the operations and maintenance plan to ensure that cleaned classrooms and campus areas remain free of asbestos over time.
2. Because some increased risk of developing asbestos-related disease is possible, people in the most highly exposed groups (coaches, outdoor maintenance staff, and student athletes) should inform their physician about their potential asbestos exposure. Their

physician can offer appropriate preventive care and watch for early signs of disease. If the time since a person was first exposed is greater than 10 years (the minimum time for asbestos-related lung changes to occur), or if a person has symptoms of respiratory disease, the physician may recommend consultation with a specialist who has expertise in asbestos-related disease. ATSDR physicians are available to provide advice to private physicians, if requested, and are developing outreach programs to educate local healthcare providers about asbestos-related disease.

3. The state should continue to monitor health outcome data for asbestos-related disease.
4. ATSDR should investigate the potential for amphibole asbestos exposure in the community as a whole and use this information to study the link between low level environmental exposures and resulting health effects in communities.
5. The El Dorado County Air Quality Management District should ensure full enforcement of state and county air toxics regulations to minimize potential asbestos exposures in the community.
6. Homeowners should follow local and state recommendations for minimizing asbestos exposure around the home.

What happens next?

Current and planned activities

1. ATSDR will evaluate additional EPA data collected in other areas of the county to assess risks of amphibole exposure at Oak Ridge High School and other nearby areas with naturally occurring asbestos.
2. ATSDR will use this information to evaluate the necessity and feasibility of conducting appropriate health studies for Oak Ridge High School and the community.
3. ATSDR will also evaluate the necessity and feasibility of maintaining a registry to track potentially exposed people in the area.
4. ATSDR will provide information and recommendations to the community and health care providers on asbestos-related disease.

5. ATSDR will collect and analyze community-level data (i.e., individual concerns, questions, and news media content) and provide community education as indicated.

Where can I get more information?

Read the health consultation

More detail and information is available in the body of the public health consultation. You can view a copy of the document at the following locations:

Oak Ridge High School Library
1120 Harvard Way
El Dorado Hills, California 95762
(916) 933-6982

El Dorado County Main Library
345 Fair Lane
Placerville, California 95667
(530) 621-5540

El Dorado County Public Health Department
931 Spring Street
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-6100

El Dorado Hills Community Services District
1021 Harvard Way
El Dorado Hills, California 95762
(916) 933 - 6624

Also, Information on how to access the public health consultation online will be posted on the ATSDR website at www.atsdr.cdc.gov.

You can request a personal copy of the public health consultation by calling the ATSDR Records Center at 1-888-422-8737.

Contact ATSDR

If you want information on the procedures or the content of the public health consultation, you may contact members of the Oak Ridge High School site team:

Commander Susan Muza
ATSDR Senior Regional Representative
San Francisco, CA
(415) 947-4316

Youlanda Outin
ATSDR Community Involvement Specialist
Atlanta, GA
1-888-422-8737

Toll free call:

1-888-42-ATSDR (1-888-422-8737)

If necessary, please leave a message—including your name, area code and phone number, and reference to Oak Ridge High School in El Dorado Hills, California—so we can return your call.

How and where do I submit comments?

Important!

ATSDR welcomes comments about the public health consultation. Comments must be made in writing and sent to ATSDR by June 20, 2005.

Mailing address

Please send written comments to:
ATSDR
ATTN: Division of Health Assessment and Consultation
Records Center
1600 Clifton Road, NE, Mail Stop E-60
Atlanta, Georgia 30333

Please indicate that your comments refer to the public health consultation on Oak Ridge High School in El Dorado Hills, California.

What ATSDR will do with comments

Comments received during the public comment period will be recorded as part of the administrative record for the public health consultation. ATSDR will address comments in an appendix of the final public health consultation. Names of people who have submitted comments will not be included in the final public health consultation. However, their names will be subject to release, if requested, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

